

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Supercon Inc

Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Supercon Selects New Erp Solution To Integrate Business Processes

Client Profile:

Supercon, Inc. has been manufacturing superconducting wire longer than any other company in the world. The company's modern facility in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts was specifically built for the production of composite metal wire products. Its 40 employees are actively involved in the research, development, and production of all types of low-temperature superconductors for the industrial, medical, and telecommunications industries. For over 35 years, Supercon has been the leader in superconducting materials, and is a four-time recipient of the R&D 100 Awards for technical innovation.

Situation:

Supercon was using the financial capabilities of an enterprise resource planning (ERP) application for efficient and effective front office operations, but recognized the need to incorporate its production materials and manufacturing operations processes into one application. The company wanted to increase operational visibility to track quotes, customer orders, and shipping. Supercon asked the Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MassMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, to provide an objective assessment and evaluation of the current business system, and for assistance in methodically choosing a replacement ERP solution if required.

Solution:

MassMEP conducted on-site interviews with key Supercon managers to assess the company's business system needs now and in the future. From these interviews, MassMEP developed a comprehensive document outlining all Supercon functional requirements, based on a series of over 500 requirements formulated by SoftSelect Systems, LLC. MassMEP used this document to determine key criteria for the selection process.

An initial review of the key requirements showed that Supercon's existing ERP system would not meet future needs. Therefore, MassMEP submitted Supercon's requirements to SoftSelect, which scanned a database of over 300 potential ERP solutions. SoftSelect produced a list of 14 potential solutions, and MassMEP interviewed the companies to evaluate their offerings. MassMEP presented a short-list of five candidates to Supercon for more in-depth evaluation. Three ERP solution providers were finally invited to Supercon to give product demonstrations and hold discussions about implementation methodology. Supercon selected a flexible but robust ERP solution. The new system will

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allow integration of business processes and continual improvements. In addition, timely data access and analysis will enable Supercon to proactively meet customer delivery requirements. System implementation began in January 2003.

Results:

Saved money by selecting a database platform that does not require an increase in capital hardware spending.

Avoided \$50,000 in overhead labor costs in the first year of implementation.

Improved on-time delivery rates and improved customer satisfaction.

Testimonial:

"The ERP requirements gathering and selection methodology that the Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership used gave us the confidence we needed to move forward. The entire process presented software solutions and options we could never have uncovered on our own in the time frame allowed. We are pleased with the outcome."

Terry Wong, Vice President